

Remarks

Reconsideration of this Application is respectfully requested.

Upon entry of the foregoing amendment, claims 1-5 and 7-9 are pending in the application, with claim 1 being the only independent claim. Claim 1 has been amended to more clearly point out and distinctly claim the subject matter. Descriptive support for the amendments to claim 1 is found in the specification as filed. These changes are believed to introduce no new matter, and their entry is respectfully requested.

Based on the above amendment and the following Remarks, Applicants respectfully request that the Examiner reconsider all outstanding objections and rejections and they be withdrawn.

Claim Rejections Under 35 U.S.C. § 102

The Examiner rejected claims 1-9 under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b) as allegedly having been anticipated by the Cuneo *et al.* patent (5,727,492). The Applicant respectfully requests that the Examiner reconsider this rejection in view of the above amendment and the following remarks.

The Examiner rejected claim 1 based on Cuneo *et al.* However, the Examiner does not point out, and Cuneo *et al.* does not suggest or disclose, the claimed element of the *support structure* connecting the first and second components and permitting relative sliding motion between the first and second components in a horizontal direction while providing vertical load support for the adjacent tank wall.

Furthermore, the Examiner rejected claim 6 arguing that the components 51 and 53 of the Cuneo *et al.* patent slide parallel to the grooves and also slide in an orthogonal movement due to the space between 51 and 53. The Examiner not only did not point out the claimed intermediate element of the *support structure* but also fails to point out the claimed relationship between the first component, the support structure, and the second component. Cuneo *et al.* does not disclose a support structure that permits sliding motion between the support structure and first component and also permits orthogonal sliding motion between the support structure and the second component. It is evident from this that the Cuneo *et al.* patent does not disclose or fairly suggest a support structure as presently claimed.

Because Cuneo *et al.* neither teaches nor suggests at least this aspect of the invention, Cuneo *et al.* does not anticipate the claimed invention or render it obvious. Applicants therefore respectfully request that the Examiner reconsider his rejections under § 102(b) and that they be withdrawn. Applicant believes that claim 1 is now allowable as presented and, because dependent claims inherently include all the elements from claims from which they depend, the dependent claims 2-5 and 7-9 should also be allowable as being dependent from allowable claim 1.

The Examiner also rejected claims 1-9 under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b) as allegedly having been anticipated by the Becker *et al.* patent (3,937,353). The Applicant respectfully requests that the Examiner reconsider this rejection in view of the above amendment and the following remarks.

The Examiner rejected claim 1-9 with little or no explanation but did argue in the Office Action that the upper supports allow for movement in both directions and the lower supports allow for movement in the horizontal direction only. However, Becker *et al.* does not disclose a support assembly that provides *vertical load support* while a support structure connects the first and second components and permits relative sliding motion between the first and second components in a horizontal direction. The Becker *et al.* patent demonstrates that the apparatus described in the Becker *et al.* patent is quite different than that claimed in the instant application. The lower supports of Becker *et al.*, as stated by the Examiner, do provide vertical load support but fail to teach a support structure that permits sliding motion between the support structure and first component and also permits orthogonal sliding motion between the support structure and the second component. Alternatively, the upper supports of the Becker *et al.* patent do permit sliding motion in two orthogonal directions but fail to teach vertical load support. Thus, the Becker *et al.* patent does not disclose or fairly suggest a support assembly as presently claimed.

Because Becker *et al.* neither teaches nor suggests at least this aspect of the invention, Becker *et al.* does not anticipate the claimed invention or render it obvious. Applicant therefore respectfully requests that the Examiner reconsider his rejections under § 102(b) and that they be withdrawn. Furthermore, the Cuneo *et al.* patent and the Becker *et al.* patent, alone or in combination, do not anticipate or fairly suggest the application as claimed and the Applicant believes that the present claims are now patentable over the cited references. As such, the

Applicant believes that claim 1 is now allowable and likewise by their dependency, claims 2-5 and 7-9 are also allowable as being dependent from claim 1.

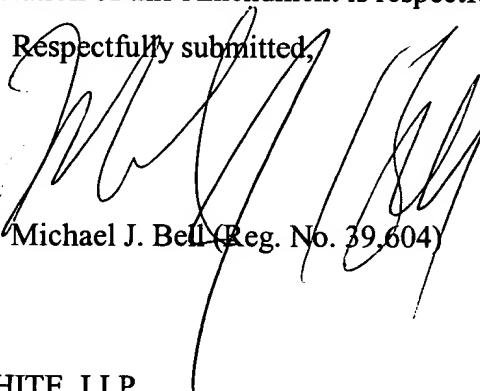
Conclusion

All of the stated grounds of objection and rejection have been properly traversed, accommodated, or rendered moot. Applicant therefore respectfully requests that the Examiner reconsider all presently outstanding objections and rejections and that they be withdrawn. Applicants believe that a full and complete response has been made to the outstanding Office Action and, as such, the present application is in condition for allowance.

If the Examiner believes, for any reason, that personal communication will expedite prosecution of this application, the Examiner is invited to telephone Michael Bell at (202) 383-6500.

Prompt and favorable consideration of this Amendment is respectfully requested.

Respectfully submitted,


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Date: June 3, 2003

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